

Gulf of Mexico Program Report

Bryon O. Griffith, Deputy Director



August/September 2002

In This Issue:

- < ***Project Highlight: Davis Pond Monitoring Project***
- < ***Nutrient Project Team Meeting***
- < ***Consumption Advisories Project Team***
- < ***Introduction of Bob Howard, New Region 4 Liaison to the GMP***
- < ***Gulf Guardian Award Details***
- < ***WWL 870 AM Radio Interview on the Andre' Show***
- < ***Mark Your Calendar***

Project Highlight: Davis Pond Monitoring Project

A project funded by the Gulf of Mexico Program is gathering real-time water quality monitoring data for the recently opened Davis Pond Diversion Project. The Davis Pond Diversion is located on the Mississippi River just upstream from New Orleans and is designed to bring fresh water back into estuaries that are being threatened by salt water intrusion. The data gathered by this monitoring station will be used to help evaluate the impact of the diversion on the estuarine system. For more information see the GMP web page at:

<http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/pubinfo/empact.html>. (Contact: Drew Puffer, 228-688-3913 or puffer.drew@epa.gov)

Nutrient Project Team Meeting

A workshop of state and federal agencies was held to consider the possibility of developing a scientific assessment of nutrient loads and the biological responses to estuaries and near coastal waters in the Northern Gulf of Mexico.

Workshop objectives were to: 1) develop a clear rationale as to why this project is needed; 2) identify and describe the databases available for use in the project; and 3) develop a statement of the goals and objectives of the project.

Day one concentrated on information sharing and discussions on data availability. It was noted that estuaries and coastal waters are especially complex ecosystems where it is often difficult to distinguish the effects of anthropogenic nutrient enrichment from natural variability. By the end of day two, it was determined that there is enough information available to develop a scientific assessment of nutrient loads to the estuaries and near coastal waters. There is less information on the biological responses, but that should not prevent the group from moving forward. A Steering Committee will develop a strategy for use by a working group to begin database identification, data retrieval, and data analysis. This will likely be a two-year effort and the outcome will be a significant characterization and assessment of the ecosystem as it relates to nutrient loadings. The product of this effort will assist states and federal managers in the developing nutrient criteria and management responses, which in turn will aid in the restoration and protection of the water quality of the Northern Gulf of Mexico's estuarine and near-coastal marine water resources. (Contact: Larinda Tervelt, 228-688-1033 or tervelt.larinda@epa.gov)

Consumption Advisories Project Team

The Gulf of Mexico Program Project Team on Consumption Advisories for Mercury in Gulf Marine Fish met via conference call Aug. 28 2002. The team agreed that the states will begin by working toward harmonizing the language in the existing king mackerel advisories. This will serve as an initial effort at developing "boilerplate language" that all the states can use in issuing other advisories for migratory marine fish if it becomes prudent to do so.

A steering committee consisting of the following members was formed to plan a workshop: Kirk Wiles, Spencer Garrett, Robert Starszak (he needs to check with Diane Dugas, Chris Piehler, Henry Folmar, Annette Ashizawa, Neal Sass, Joe Sekerke (needs approval for out-of-state travel), Tom Herrington, and Fred Kopfler. The workshop is tentatively set for December 10-11, 2002.

The steering committee will develop the agenda, time and venue for the workshop. The workshop goals are (1) determine if we can develop a consistent advisory for king mackerel; (2) see if this can be used as boiler plate for other species; (3) identify species that are pelagic and cross state lines where it may be possible to develop a common advisory; and (4) establish a workplan for accomplishing any remaining details. In developing the workshop the steering committee will identify the differences and commonalities in advisories, and how to take advantage of the "low hanging fruit." (**Contact: Fred Kopfler, 228-688-2712 or kopfler.fred@epa.gov**)

Introduction of Bob Howard, New Region 4 Liaison to the GMP

As you may know, Lloyd Wise with EPA Region 4 recently retired. Lloyd served many years as the Region's liaison to the Gulf of Mexico Program. We'd like to give you a brief introduction to the new Region 4 liaison, Mr. Robert B. Howard. Bob has 30 years experience as an environmental engineer and environmental manager with the EPA. For the last 10 years he has worked with coastal issues including the National Estuary Program (NEP) and the Coastal Non-Point Source Program. Mr. Howard is currently the EPA Regional representative for the Mobile Bay NEP, the Charlotte Harbor NEP and the Gulf of Mexico Program. Previous experience with the EPA includes 13 years managing a Section implementing the National Environmental Policy Act for EPA programs and a one year detail working with the Superfund program. Mr. Howard has a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering and a Master's Degree in Sanitary Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. (**Contact: Bob Howard, 404-562-9370, or howard.bob@epa.gov**)

Gulf Guardian Award Details

The award ceremony for the 2002 Gulf Guardian Award winners is rapidly approaching. The winners will be honored Nov. 6, from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. during the Clean Gulf 2002 Conference being held at Moody Gardens in Galveston, Texas. GMP partners (and their guests) wishing to attend the ceremony can do so at no expense and will also be allowed to tour the exhibit floor on the day of the awards ceremony. You do not have to be a registered conference attendee to attend the Gulf Guardian Awards ceremony. However, you must have a special badge which will be available to you at the conference registration area after completion of the appropriate form. Please contact Terry Hines Smith if you wish to attend the ceremony and she will fax or email you a form and assist you in completing it. The GMP will be exhibiting at the conference, so please take a minute during your time there and visit our booth. A continental breakfast will be available during the awards ceremony. Join us in Galveston and help honor our 2002 Gulf Guardians. Gulf Guardian Award winners profiles are available on the GMP web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/gulfguard/2002inscriptionsonawards.htm>. (**Contact: Terry Hines Smith, 228-688-1159 or hines-smith.terry@epa.gov**)

WWL 870 AM Radio Interview on the Andre' Show

Water was the topic of conversation Aug. 20 on WWL radio's Andre' Show. The guests for the morning were Bryon Griffith, acting directory for the Gulf of Mexico Program and Tracy Mehan, Assistant Administrator for Water at EPA headquarters in Washington, D.C. Griffith was available via the remote broadcast done monthly by the program from Beau Rivage Resort and Casino in Biloxi, Miss., and Mehan was piped in via telephone. During the call in program Griffith and Mehan were able to highlight the Gulf of Mexico Program, water conservation ideas and the One Gulf campaign and web site. The Andre' Show boasts approximately 25,000 listeners per day. The show is ranked number one for adults 35-plus in its time slot out of 25 stations in the New Orleans demographic market area. (**Contact: Terry Hines Smith, 228-688-1159 or hines-smith.terry@epa.gov**)

Mark Your Calendars.

Oct. 8-9: Management Committee, New Orleans, LA
Oct 14: Columbus Day Holiday
Oct 16-17: Gulf States Beach Coordination Meeting, River House, Stennis Space Center, MS
Oct. 24-25: Communications Committee Meeting, Tampa, FL, The Florida Aquarium
Nov. 5-7: Clean Gulf Conference, Moody Gardens, Galveston, TX - GG Awards to be Presented Nov 6
Nov. 6-7: Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting, Bay St. Louis, MS
Nov. 11: Veterans Day Holiday
Dec 10-11: Mercury Advisory Project Team Workshop, Embassy Suites, New Orleans, LA
Dec 12: PRB Meeting, Embassy Suites, New Orleans, LA

Gulf of Mexico Program Office • Mail Code: EPA/GMPO • Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-6000